Research Article

A Descriptive Study into Implementation Challenges and Promotion Measures for E-commerce during COVID-19 Period

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A B S T R A C T

Due to the rapid development on technology and science, the emergence of implementing new methods and forms of economic activities arise. E-commerce in India faces some obstacles to prosper and grow including regulations, infrastructure and the business environment. It is expected e-commerce market in India of the total business transactions over the Internet in 2015 to grow by 8%. Majority (37%) of the respondents agreed consumer's awareness is low. 41% of the respondents recommended promotion of internet as the best strategy.

Keywords: COVID-19, Pandemic, E-commerce

Introduction

Due to the rapid development on technology and science, the emergence of implementing new methods and forms of economic activities arose. The implementation of new business form aimed to meet the consumer needs should include global competitions, monopolization of sale market and active development of information technology. From here the concept of electronic commerce or e-commerce appear. The term electronic commerce or e-commerce is a specific part of e-business that include all public relations for the sale of goods, services and data through the internet using all tools available on the network. E-commerce adaptation and implementation have been researched more on developed and developing countries. However, the amount of studies concentrate on e-commerce in India is inadequate. One of the main barrier to adopt and use e-commerce is the lack of technical skills of individuals. Many people do not have technical skills to deal with computers or to use internet website. In India, some people are not so good in English language. For the transaction over internet using electronic devices, language becomes a major factor to purchases a particular product or services. (UNPA and ASPA, 2009). Slow transmission speeds, frequent disconnects, cost of Wireless connection and wireless communication standards over which data is transmitted are the major factors that impede internet access. High-speed bandwidth of Internet connection may not available to some places. Multiple issues of trust including lack of payment gateways, lack of widely accepted standards, privacy of personal data connected over the Internet, security and confidentiality of data, IT Infrastructure and its maintenance, technological and legal provisions are all affecting the growth of ecommerce in any country. With the internet connectivity through mobile devices, many consumers are making decisions online. The government policies must ensure the effective cost of methods/ solutions

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for enterprises to let it build the brand digitally and enhance productivity.

E-commerce in India faces some obstacles to prosper and grow including regulations, infrastructure and the business environment. The Saudi government is still working on the infrastructure for the development of many areas. There is no doubt that information technology in general has evolved significantly the past few years, many obstacles have been treated and India has become one of the most Asia countries suited to the field of e-commerce. However, there are remaining observations and failures in some aspects. These are some of the most important obstacles and difficulties facing the development and growth of e-commerce sector in the India. Below are some obstacles faced by the India:

- Internet Access: The key to activating e-commerce is widespread access to the Internet. India Internet service fees are high compared with other countries, meaning that Internet service is not available in all public areas. The occasionally slow service also hinders user access to shopping sites

- However, in the last five years, Internet service companies have emerged and the increased competition has meant for better service at an affordable price

- Services Delivery: When purchasing goods online, the delivery service will be the most important requirement. In India there are some companies provide shipment services but still not as it should be for linking sellers and buyers via the Internet. The total reliance on personal transport or the mail system, with their high fees, has limited the expansion of e-commerce for the biggest companies in the country. Moreover, the lack of clarity of home addresses causes delay or loss in shipment. India post office is making efforts in uniting the houses of individuals and institutions, corporations and other government facility addresses through the "national address"

- Payment: The payment method is one of the most important tools for e-commerce and often is accomplished through credit cards or electronic checks. While there are credit cards in India, the high fees and other charges for those cards have discouraged the majority of people from using them, which hinders an important aspect in the basics of e-commerce, making payment safe and easy for both parties. There is also a lack of guaranteed bank protection for individuals in the case of piracy or fraud through the Internet. It is expected e-commerce market in India of the total business transactions over the Internet in 2015 to grow by 8%. According to trend report, Cash on Delivery (CoD) is one of the most common means of payment in India, reflecting the lack of consumer confidence from the payment via the Internet. CoD is a type of transaction in which payment for a good is made at the time of delivery. If the purchaser does not make payment when the good is delivered, then the good is returned to the seller

This study aimed to explore the concept and implementation of e-commerce in India. (Add status of COVID-19 and preventive measures in brief).

Research Methodology

The study undertaken was descriptive in nature as it provides description of the state of affairs. The study included 120 samples chosen by simple random sampling method. It is one of the probability sampling techniques. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. The data was tabulated and simple percentage analysis was done to interpret the data. (Add study area, Philosophy, Strategy of methods).

Literature Review

Liu, He, Gao and Xie (2017), Regardless of online or offline shopping, retailers should put in more effort to create better environment so that shoppers are able to shop in positive emotions and enjoy the shopping process. The study stated that the page design, layout and color match will bring the first impression to the visitors, thus e-tailers should design comfortable and pleasing pages to attract customers and prolong their stay so that it will increase the possibility of purchase.[1]

Palmer and Griffith (2016), The Web can also be used for communicating company image and philosophy. Firms can establish an online presence, give information about themselves and their offerings and promote their philosophies very effectively through the Web. Companies can perform almost anything they do in the offline market in an online context. A compilation of the commonly mentioned activities include taking and placing orders, following new business opportunities.[2]

Kline and Mehta (2016) Creatively state, there is a shift in the current online vision of firms from "how to get in the game" to "how to play the game." However, many studies emphasize what firms can do online and the advantages and disadvantages they will experience, adequate effort has still not been shown toward formulating a strategic perspective of the online marketing environment. Companies can emphasize the importance they give to doing ethical business, subscribe to regulation programs.[3]

Kotler and Gutman (2015), Assurance is important to capture confidentiality, shopping security, complaint resolution, problem solving and warranties. In an online shopping environment, consumers are not associated with a physical location while they are only communicating with a machine and not human being. With the inability of consumers to feel

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and touch the product in an online context because online retailing lacks the tangible features, it makes it difficult to market those products on the internet.[4]

O'Keefe and McEachern (2015), therefore, building on the information advantage can be expected to pay off in the future. Constructing effective decision support systems and assisting consumers with interactive decision tools are also successful attempts that need to be developed further. However, investing on the pre-purchase stages of the decision making process is not adequate.[5]

Data Analysis

Interpretation

Table 1 and Figure 1, reveal that 23% of the respondents regard security concern, 31% of the respondents regard lack of trust, 37% of the respondents regard low consumers awareness and 17% of the respondents regard all the below as implementation challenges for e-commerce. Majority (37%) of the respondents agreed consumer awareness is low.

Table 1.Implementation Challenges

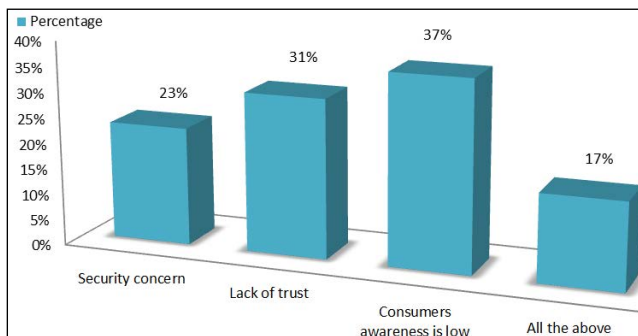| Implementation challenges	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Security concern	28	23
Lack of trust	37	31
Consumers awareness is low	44	37
All the above	20	17
Total	120	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 1.Implementation Challenges

Interpretation

Table 2 and Figure 2, reveal that 41% of the respondents prefer promotion of internet, 28% of the respondents prefer increasing the awareness level among people, 18% of the respondents prefer giving promotional speech and 9% of the respondents prefer other measures as promotional technique. Majority (41%) of the respondents prefer promotion over internet.

Table 2.Measures Recommend for Promotion

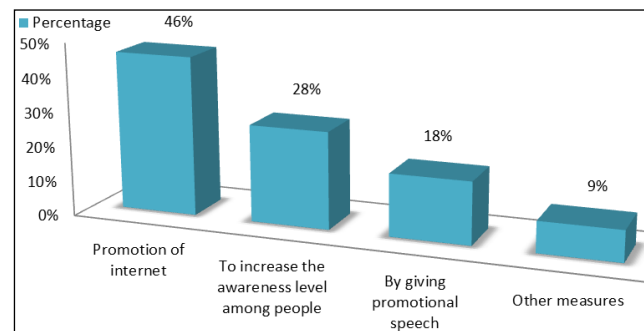| Measures recommend for Promotion	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Promotion of internet	55	46
To increase the awareness level among people	33	28
By giving promotional speech	21	18
Other measures	11	9
Total	120	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 2.Measures Recommend for Promotion

Conclusion

With the unprecedented growth in e-commerce during the challenging period of COVID-19 in India, a demand for novel promotional strategies grew. This study concludes that the promotion using internet media is the best technique. There are multiple implementation barriers among which low consumer awareness is the issue that needs to be overcome by e-commerce companies. There were several challenges even prior to COVID-19 crisis, the present situation and the unprecedented expansion of e-commerce for masses and companies has highlighted the need for policy action.

Recommendation

- Affordable and high quality wifi network is required in remote and rural areas, These areas should be included in financial policy making and building trust and skill enhancement for e-commerce
- Uncertainty of regulations in the area of e-commerce should be reduced to support novel business models

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